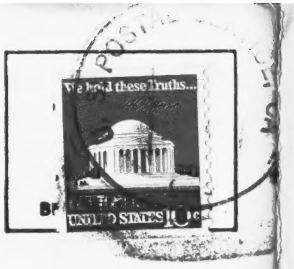
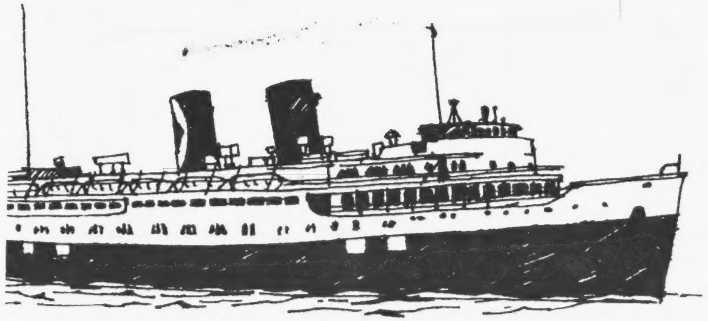
FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

**First Class**

**To:**



*PRINCESS MARGUERITE COMMITTEE*

LETTERS WILL HELP SAVE PRINCESS MARGUERITE

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Policy is not yet firm. Please address a card or letter to: The Hon. Dave Barrett, Premier of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., CANADA. Please ask Prem. Barrett to add the ship to the B.C. fleet for continued operation from Victoria. Your card or letter WILL help.

PRINCESS MARGUERITE COMMITTEE
Glenn Lee, 800 1st Ave. N. #37, Seattle, Washington 98109.

Henry Posner's southbd train at Brattleboro, VT. See p. 8. Photo by author.

# rail travel newsletter

30¢

VOL. 4 NO. 22
SECOND ISSUE OF
NOVEMBER 1974
#96

Roger Lewis

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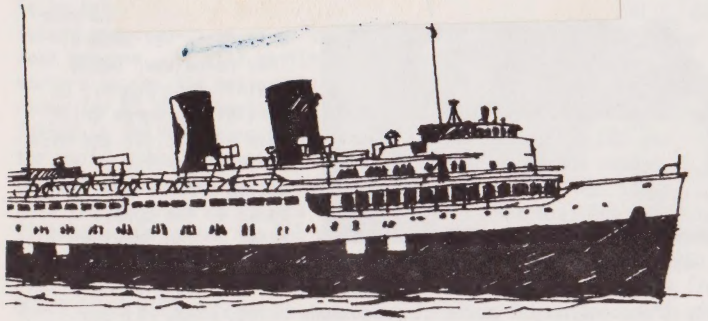
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

**First Class**

**To:**



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## THE COVER STORY

Amtrak's President Roger Lewis, citing "personal reasons," told the Amtrak board of directors on Nov. 20 that he will resign as head of the rail passenger corporation as soon as a new president can be found. The 62-year-old Lewis will remain on as board chairman once he relinquishes his present post. The board has been searching for a new president for several months, as reported here earlier. Two men mentioned as possible successors to Lewis are Paul Reistrup of ICG and Paul Cruikshank of the U.S. Railway Association. Since it is felt that a salary of over $60,000 is essential to recruitment of a new head, it is expected that a renewed effort will be seen in Congress shortly to gain approval for a higher salary, a move which Congress earlier turned down. Mr. Lewis said he hopes to be able to step aside around next February or March. (Cover photo by Message Media, date 1971.)

## GLOOMY PREDICTIONS FOR FUEL SUPPLIES

The summer was allowed to slip by in a Washington tied up with Watergate, with very little serious energy conservation taking place. Auto usage seemed pretty much back to normal, altho records show gasoline sales down somewhat during the summer travel months. Now, day by day the federal government moves closer to a necessary decision on strict cutbacks of gasoline consumption. One of the big questions is whether such a cutback is to be voluntary or mandatory. A 10% reduction in oil usage is part of the international plan now being considered to deal with the alarming balance of payments deficit in dealing with the Arab oil-producing nations. As Thanksgiving holidays came on, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns told the nation that much sterner measures are necessary to deal with the energy problem. He and other Administration officials have called for a massive gasoline tax to discourage consumption, but President Ford has not yet backed this move. With automobile sales falling and workers being laid off, the transportation industry is being shown as the key to our economy. One can expect another renewed surge of demand for train travel in the near future, for which it is unlikely that we will be totally prepared.

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A REPORT FROM the Midwest says that Amtrak is seriously considering dropping two of its five Milwaukee-Chicago corridor trains as an economy move. The runs most likely to be dropped are the 6:05am Milwaukee departure and the 8:20pm from the same city. The 6:30pm and 10pm trains from Chicago would correspondingly disappear in the northbound direction..... A PAIR OF RDC cars ran from Chicago to Milwaukee on Nov. 22 as a test, followed by an E9 diesel to insure signal tripping. The RDC's were Amtrak #30 and 10..... THE SEATTLE AREA has an opportunity to bring additional rail travel funds in for transport between Bellevue and Seattle if it decides to scrap a proposed project which is at an impasse, over construction of interstate 90 in that route. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer editorialized over the problem, calling the rapid transit alternative "attractive," but did not take sides in the issue..... DURING GRAYHOUND'S STRIKE, the Chicago & North Western ran a special student train from DeKalb to Chicago, on Nov. 22. The bilevel equipment train left DeKalb at 1pm and reached Chicago at 2:45. Disappointingly, only 80 students used the train. The railroad annoucned it will run another on Dec. 1 leaving Chicago 4pm and arriving 5:45..... THE GREYHOUND STRIKE also boosted business on the COAST STARLIGHT, with coach sections jumping from 5 to 7 cars. However, no lunch counter cars were added as the train neared its summer-peak consists.....

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Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 22 (Whole No. 96), Second Issue of November, 1974. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $7.00 per year; single copy 30¢ (vol. 1-3 25¢). STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Malibu; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Mailing date of this issue: December 2, 1974.

# Express Ads

AMTRAK AND THE HOLIDAYS! Take the hassle out of holiday travel--make your plans and reservations early with the helpful Amtrak Professionals at GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. "An Amtrak-appointed agency dedicated to the pleasure of travel by train."

RAILROAD UNIFORM sleeve/vest buttons 40¢ each. Reading, Southern, Frisco, Erie, Milwaukee, New Haven, Rock Island, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Western Pacific, Lehigh Valley, Southern Pacific, Steam Engine, Jersey Central, Northern Pacific, Nickel Plate, Central Vermont and Long Island. The following 50¢ each: Lackawanna and Seaboard Coast Line. The following 75¢ each: Boston and Maine, Rutland, St. Charles St. Ry., Staten Island Rapid Transit, Washington Terminal, and Western Maryland. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

FOR CHRISTMAS - A 28 page storybook to color. "STEAMY" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. His adventures on the old D&RGW narrow gauge will give youngsters a feel for Rocky Mountain railroading as it was. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, Jr., 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

ROCK ISLAND PLAYING CARDS. New, limited edition. High quality, attractive design. Available with black or red backs. $1.50 plus 25¢ per deck post. & hdlg. Make check or M.O. payable to "Rock Island Lines" and send to: Rock Island Lines, Public Relations Dept. RTN, 139 W. Van Buren St., Chicago IL 60605.

EASTERN & SOUTHERN U.S. AMTRAK MAIL ORDER TICKET SERVICE - Let us take the time-consuming and oftentimes costly to you chore right out of your hands by simply writing or calling our Washington, DC Area firm with exactly what you need and when; we'll do the rest. 28 years experience can only help you. HELFT WORLD TRAVEL LTD., 164 Maple Avenue East, Vienna, VA 22180. (703) 938-4666.

OUR COMBING of the nation for public timetables has worked. Collections are coming to us from everywhere. We can handle even more. Top prices. We are the upper crust of timetable dealers. Try us first for $'s sake. Antique Timecard Acquisitors, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland, PA 18966.

JUST PRINTED - "Railroad Potpourri," 80 pages, soft cover, 6 x 9, 73 pictures covering a railfan's 40 years of railroad photography. $4.00 postpaid. Homer R. Hill, 19 Quimby Lane, Bernardsville, NJ 07924.

WANTED: Harry Christiansen's "Lake Shore Electric." Send offer to Gareth Rosenau, 42 W. Chestnut Ave., Carlisle, PA 17013.

Proposed Norfolk-Cincinnati run is ridiculous, redundant and will have few riders. Needed is Detroit-Cincinnati-Atlanta-Florida run. Come on, NRPC/DOT, Wake Up! R. D. Goldstein, 74 E. Hollister, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

"NORTHWEST SUBURBAN MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT" Illus. description of Chicago commuter line. 14 pages total (incl. 8-8x10 pix), spiral bound. $2.60 ppd. Ky. res. add 13¢ sales tax. B.L. Wright, 1400 Valley Drive, Louisville, KY 40213.

When in Kansas City, visit the Kansas City Railroad Museum, located at 3rd and Broadway in the fascinating River Quay district. Open Sat. & Sun. 1-5PM. Gift Shop. Phone: 471-9321. Lounge & Pullman also available for private parties & excursions. Information: Smoky Hill, PO Box 124, Shawnee-Mission, KS 66201.

RTN's EXPRESS ADS cost just 50¢ per line for line of 80 characters and spaces. Display ads are $25 per page (5x8 inches), with smaller sizes priced proportionally. Write: MESSAGE MEDIA - RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

# Rail Canada

A CORONER'S JURY in Kamloops, B.C. was told in late November that a CN freight train which had collided head-on with the SUPER CONTINENTAL passenger train Sept. 28 (see RTN, 1st Oct. issue) had disregarded signals and had run thru an automatically set switch minutes before hitting the passenger units. The two freight enginemen were killed. A coroner's jury inspected the site.

B.C. TRANSPORT MINISTER Robert Strachan announced that the province will not buy the Princess Marguerite steamer to operate on the Seattle-Victoria run (it was cancelled by CP on Sept. 30). "Why should the government buy all the losers?" replied Strachan answering a question by MLA James Gorst, also of the ruling NDP party. Strachan claimed B.C's first priority was to make sure the existing ferry fleet met public demand. It has been pointed out that such demand will increase if the Marguerite's passengers switch to auto ferries, and that the average yearly loss for B.C. Ferries is now $20 million for the 24 vessels of the fleet, or nearly $1 million per vessel. (In contrast, CP says the Marguerite lost about $90,000 per year average, or about one-tenth the yearly loss of a B.C. ferry. Jim Gorst, representative to the B.C. legislature from Esquimalt, a Victoria suburb, has called upon the government to buy the ex-CP steamer to return it to the Seattle-Victoria run. He said elimination of it would cost Victoria 100 jobs directly, $500,000 in sightseeing revenues, and other tourist-related income.

TORONTO'S PROPOSED MAGNETIC levitation GO-Urban medium rapid transit project is dead. The West German government and the Krauss-Maffei AG company developing the system washed their hands of the experimental development in mid-November. The Ontario government, sponsoring the test system at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, promptly announced it was cancelling test-track construction. The West German government had invested some $12.5 million in the technology; and K-M a similar amount.

Ontario Premier William Davis, criticized frequently for the mag-lev project, suffered additional blows from the opposition parties. Liberal party leader Robert Nixon said the entire project should be cancelled to save taxpayers an astronomical amount. Others linked the GO-Urban project with the cancelled Spadina freeway project, and called for new freeway construction, and an express bus system. Nixon said that light rapid transit (modern streetcars) would be more suitable for transit advances in Hamilton, Ottawa, Windsor and Toronto.

The cancellation came only one week after it was announced that the mag-lev vehicles were having difficulty rounding curves at a West German test site. Environmentalists have also had their ire raised by the project. Some 66 mature shade trees, some over 100 years old, were cut down at the CNE to make way for the mag-lev guidebeams. Footings for the 2.5-mile system at the CNE will be covered over, according to the Ontario Transport Minister.

Shock waves from the sudden cancellation of the project have reverberated thru Ontario's complex transportation politics. The ruling Conservative Party has lost 4 seats in recent by-elections, and a portion of the loss has been attributed to the government's failure to "get moving" on transportation programs since cancellation of the Spadina expressway in Toronto 3½ years ago. As opposition parties called for more freeways, the Conservatives announced extension of the heavy Don Valley Parkway in Toronto, and also a widening of the project. Toronto Metro Council chairman Paul Godfrey called it a "return to sanity," the first discussion of additional urban freeways for three years by the province.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY service was shut down for a week beginning Nov. 22 by a strike of shopcraft workers.

CANADIAN NATIONAL HAS purchased two vessels from the Stena Lines, operating Denmark-Sweden. CN will use the new ships in the Newfoundland ferry service. The vessels are only a few years old, and poshly appointed.

page 4 - 5 - 6 combination

# *mixed train of thoughts*

THE CANADIAN LRC train was due to take a trip to the West Coast from Pueblo, where it has been undergoing DOT tests, but the run was cancelled at the last minute. Train would've gone from Pueblo to Las Vegas to Los Angeles to San Diego and straight on up the Amtrak line to Vancouver..... MOBIL OIL CORPORATION in its series of big "educational" ads is calling for, among other things, a comprehensive "National Master Transportation Program" to cover all our transport needs and provide enough money for same..... SP'S FIGHT TO eliminate its San Francisco commute runs got a shot in the arm from an item in Trains Magazine (Dec.), which could have been written by a railroad P.R. man. It said that newspaper ads "haven't helped." It didn't detail the character of those non-ads, however (see an earlier RTN for a description of SP's first ad placed under duress)..... AND SPEAKING OF San Francisco, Mayor Alioto has recently been promoting "carless days" by taking the bus himself once a week; however, the idea does not seem to have caught on among commuters in the city..... A BUS SUPPORTER, defeated Republican Congressman Dick Shoup of Montana, who as a lawyer represents the National Association of Motor Bus Owners, is trying to get himself a seat on the ICC, reports the Washington Star-News..... GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES DON'T ride trains enough, claims Congressman Les Aspin of Wisconsin. He surveyed the situation and found that less than ½ of 1% ride trains in business travel, while before Amtrak the figure was 1.37%. He called for more rail use to help Amtrak..... THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT has arranged to purchase 200 new rail passenger cars to be built in Canada. Then 200 more will be built in Mexico, under Canadian supervision. This is part of a $640 million rail improvement plan for the next 10 years, which will include improvement of rail lines and stations..... ANNUAL EURAIL GUIDE for 1975 will include a chapter describing narrow-gauge rail service in the U.S. The publisher, Eurail Guide Annual, 27540 Pacific Coast Hwy, Malibu, CA 90265, is asking railfans and operators to submit info for free listing..... THE EMPIRE BUILDER article in this issue carries a postscript. Glenn Lee rode it again about a month later and found improvements. He reports that ex-KANSAS CITY ZEPHYR square-end dome-parlor-observation car 9221 "Silver Tower" has been replacing a Great Dome car recently on the train, while the ex-TCZ round-end cars have been shifted to the seattle-Portland MOUNT RAINIER and PUGET SOUND. The morning train from Seattle carries the obs backwards behind the engines, as the train doesn't turn in Portland. And the ex-GN parlor-obs "Port of Seattle" was assigned to the daily (for the holiday season) NORTH COAST HIAWATHA during the Thanksgiving holidays, running on the rear..... AMTRAK BOARD MEMBER Prof. Edward Ullman made a round trip on Amtrak's PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL in Nov. as research for a report he's preparing on the train for a board meeting. Amtrak has reportedly been dissatisfied with poor revenues and sometimes poor operation of thetrain.....

* * *

RECENT EXCESSIVE DEFICITS and the overall uncertain economic outlook have led Amtrak to announce that it will terminate the winter-only operation of the MIAMIAN on Jan. 10, 1975 instead of April. And there are rumors that Amtrak will take even more drastic steps to cut losses by cutting the EMPIRE BUILDER to a 4-times weekly operation, alternating days with the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA..... ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD'S Director of Suburban and Passenger Services M. H. Bonesteel has announced that the railroad has entered into a "gentleman's agreement" with the Illinois DOT to continue running its two passenger trains until June 30, 1975. After that, the RI would need to be fully reimbursed for providing continued operation of the QUAD CITIES ROCKET and PEORIA ROCKET..... AMTRAK CAR 3381 "Concho", ex-Santa Fe lounge car, has recently reappeared on the LONE STAR after reshopping at Topeka following its derailment last spring on the TEXAS CHIEF in Oklahoma..... CREDIT AMTRAK'S TRAIN 361, the WOLVERINE, with the "Food-Bar-Coach Award of the Week." On Nov. 23 the train arrived in Chicago with cars 3902, PC/Amtrak 3242, 3952 and 8111, all food service cars in addition to its 3 coaches and one baggage car..... AMTRAK'S SHAWNEE #391 exchanged its regular bilevel equipment for 8 coaches and one food bar coach and ICG business car #1 on Nov. 23.....

# FIRST CLASS FANTRIP

BY HENRY POSNER III

Henry's northbound train at New London, CT. Top, the Amtrak E-8 unit that brought it in is about to cut off. Below, two GT geeps have taken the place of the Amtrak diesel. On the train's rear is the "Pennsylvania", while behind the geeps is the car "Hampton Roads", running backwards. Photos by the author.



An article in the New York Times travel section this summer had described a Mardi Gras trip on the SOUTHERN CRESCENT from Washington to New Orleans, using two of the East Coast's rare breed of private railroad cars, the heavyweight Pullman "Clover Colony" and the ex-PRR business car "Pennsylvania." The article also hinted at a one-day fall foliage excursion with these cars out of New York in October.

Having seen the "Pennsylvania" on an Amtrak 1973 football special from New York to the Army-Navy Game in Philadelphia, and having ridden the "Clover Colony", I sent for a flyer and was rewarded with the information that two trips would indeed run, on Oct. 12 and 13. The consist would include both the "Clover Colony" and the "Pennsylvania", and would run New York-New London via Amtrak, thence New London-Brattleboro, VT on the freight-only portion of the Central Vermont. The prospect of a private car trip on Amtrak and then on freight-only trackage overshadowed the considerable expense of the trip, and I ordered a ticket.

The organizer of this excursion was New York lawyer George Pins, owner of the "Pennsylvania" and keystone (no pun intended) of the New York Railroad Enthusiasts' recent bevy of "first class" fantrips. In June I had the good fortune of traveling with Mr. Pins in the "Clover Colony" and the New York RRE's lightweight ex-Frisco bedroom-lounge "Eugene Field" from New London to Montreal and return, over the entire length of the CV in the consist of a freight train that at one point was 80 cars long. The Brattleboro trip would be also on freight-only CV, which had not seen a true passenger train for a very long time.

I had originally held space in the "Pennsylvania" for the Sunday trip, but it was cancelled due to lack of patronage for the other cars in the train (the "Pennsylvania" could easily have sold out both days). So I was accommodated with another fan in the crew's section on the Saturday trip. I also learned that, as the cars were based in Philadelphia (Sunnyside Yard in New York is famous for its non-maintenance), the cars would originate in Philadelphia with the PILGRIM, the Amtrak run slated to take us to New London. Living in Princeton and knowing that the train would stop at Princeton Jct. at 6:30am on its way to New York, I would get some 40 extra miles in the "Pennsylvania" both ways. The train taking us back from New London to Philadelphia, the BUNKER HILL, was to stop there on the return as well.

Alas, the shuttle train on the 2.8-mile "PJ&B" (Princeton Jct. & Back) line doesn't run that early in the morning, and the prayer of the Princeton commuter, "Deliver us not into the hands of Irish," is to no avail. At 6:15am I was picked up by the Irish Express and Taxi Company and deposited 7 minutes later at the Junction for a fare of $4.00 (the train costs 40¢).

Waiting at the pitch-black, foggy and cold Junction while staring in thru locked doors at the warm depot interior was aggravated by the PILGRIM's tardiness of 5 minutes, but the train was certainly worth seeing as it rolled in behind a PC black GG-1. Three cars for the Amtrak portion were outnumbered by four private cars on the rear; from front to rear were the privately-owned ex-Southern business car "Hampton Roads" running platform-first; the "Eugene Field"; the "Lionel Ives" (an ex-PRR sleeper-lounge and the only private car in Amtrak colors that day); and the "Pennsylvania." Several commuters along with me boarded the private section and remarked that Amtrak had given them some very nice coaches for their trip to Newark. "Too good to be true," muttered one as he was returned to the Amtrak portion of the train.

Riding the observation end of the "Pennsylvania" over the familiar line to New York was a welcome improvement over a route I find increasingly mundane. I speculated that the trip would be livened up by some unfortunate's frantic efforts to board the train at Metro Park at 80mph (a stop discontinued but still shown in the timetable). No hysterical waves from the platform, however, and Newark was reached five minutes early as the train waited for its CNJ connection from Bay Head Jct. A light in the distance soon materialized into a GP40P, and several coaches in GN, BN and NP colors lettered for the CNJ as the "Jersey Builder" came to town. Then a quick run thru the meadows, the Hudson River tunnels and into Penn Station, where the majority of the group would board.

The trip along the electrified portion of the Shore Line to New Haven was uneventful--no windows broken (too early in the morning for that, rationalized those brave enough to ride the observation platform within the city limits). A smooth crossing of the incredible Hell Gate Bridge, and only surprised looks from New York-bound commuters on platforms passed at speed.

At New Haven it was made known that we would run as a passenger extra on Amtrak to New London, rather than simply being uncoupled from the PILGRIM at New London. No explanation was given, except that Amtrak considered it easier to run a special loco and crew for us behind the PILGRIM than to "pull the pin" on the spot at New London. And so an air whistle-equipped Amtrak E-8 gave us a fast ride along the shore to the New London station, where two CV geeps bearing white flags coupled on to take us to the CV yard. During the change of motive power we were saluted by a coal-fired steamboat that showed up from Mystic Seaport for a boat fans' excursion ("Pennsylvania's" backup air whistle saluted them in return). Also, the welcome news came that the New London station, owned by the CV and leased to Amtrak, would be saved and revitalized. With its adjacent ferry piers it is one of the only direct rail/water passenger interchanges extant in the U.S.

Once in the CV yard, the "Clover Colony," in immaculate condition, was switched in behind the "Hampton Roads." Its non-roller bearing trucks preclude it from Amtrak service, even tho Southern will carry it, and passengers for the "Colony" had to ride in the lounges of the "Eugene Field" and "Lionel Ives" as far as New London.

At last the highball, and we were off and running up the Connecticut River valley, past the Coast Guard bark "Eagle" and the submarine pens at Groton, thru Northern Connecticut towns and thru countryside at the peak of its fall foliage. Speed ranged from 30 to 60mph (the best CV track is north of White River Junction on MONTREALER rails), but we certainly ran faster than on my previous trip on the freight, where we would stop to switch, etc. PC's (soon Amtrak's) double-tracked Boston & Albany line was crossed at Palmer, followed by a faster trip over better track all the way to Brattleboro. A good buffet lunch was served in "Pennsylvania's" dining room by the ex-Pullman staff, and soon Brattleboro was achieved. South of the station our geeps ran around the train to push us the last half-mile into the station for a half-hour picture and leg-stretching stop (Amtrak's cinderblock waiting room in the basement of the old station was locked). Our southbound departure, with the "Pennsylvania" now on the head end, was delayed by a northbound B&M freight coming thru, sporting Canadian Pacific Alco power--two RS-11's and an FB unit. It became apparent, however, that this delay was endangering our Amtrak connections, as we had to be back and out before the BUNKER HILL at New London so as to be ready to be switched in at New Haven. A quick boarding of all passengers on the heels of the freight's passage, a go-ahead to the engines, and "it's in their hands now."

A few minutes on the "Pennsylvania's obs platform behind the accelerating geeps was exciting but very windy, and with the fading light it was quits for photography. A fast return run and a hot buffet supper of chicken, meatballs and baked beans found us in CV's New London yard with 15 minutes to switch out the "Clover Colony", be pushed up to the station, and onto our waiting E-8, all before the arrival of the BUNKER HILL, the last train of the night before the NIGHT OWL. However, such was not to be.

The CV yard is crossed by a bridge carrying the Shore Line on to Boston, and we could see the station as well as everything going by on the PC main. In the distance, a headlight and the lighted cars by the station and the roar of accelerating E-8's brought us to witness the dramatic passage of the northbound SENATOR, all during the switching out of the "Colony". Anxious passengers on the platform now look to the east as a lengthening shadow heralds the approaching BUNKER HILL for New York and Philadelphia, our connection! Our switching is not quite completed by the time it reaches the station, and we begin rolling five minutes after the fact, Pins on the backup whistle as the "Pennsylvania's" track inspection lights illuminate lower New London. By the time we are at the station our E-8 is waiting but no sign of the BUNKER HILL. A fast run down the Shore Line finds an anxious George Pins scanning the approaching platforms of New Haven for a train that has left two (count 'em!) two minutes before our arrival. "A lack of communication", philosophizes our worried trip director.

What to do? The contract with Amtrak required an on-time arrival at New London to be in New Haven ahead of the connection. The next train out is the NIGHT OWL, five hours from now at 2:05am. Would it be possible to run as a passenger extra the rest of the way to New York? Can Amtrak get us an extra GG-1 and crew? Yes, they can, and we're off in ten minutes to New York with a GG-1 coupled onto the "Pennsylvania's" obs platform and the 80 mph wind and straining traction motors in the faces of the die-hard fans gathered outside on the platform. Enough is enough, though, and all eventually retire to the protection of the "Pennsylvania's" lounge. We arrive in New York 20 minutes behind the BUNKER HILL and five hours ahead of the NIGHT OWL as the trip ends for most of the contented passengers, weary from a day of non-stop train riding. But the cars must get back to Philadelphia tonight, and so we are switched in the bowels of Penn Station onto the midnight "Clocker", train #235 for 30th St., Philadelphia. Our cars present a marked contrast to the three "lexan lovelies" ahead, and we are the envy of many a passenger returning from a day in The City.

Through the tunnel, across the meadows, into Newark and out, Princeton Gct. appears at 2:00 am. Good-bye to the "Pennsylvania", "Lionel clves", "Eugene Field", "Hampton Roads"; thanks to George Pins for making it possible; regret that two minutes could cost him the price of an extra from New Haven to New York.

Nevertheless, in October 1974, in the middle of the "Amtrak Era", that a trip like this could be possible, was gratifying. Applause should go to both Amtrak and the CV for accommadating such a special move. And to George Pins for a trip that just doesn't happen every year.



# EMPIRE BUILDER 1974

STILL SOME DISTANCE TO GO

**by Glenn Lee**

It was the late Lucius Beebe who remarked in his San Francisco newspaper column that "A Ride on the EMPIRE BUILDER is a Major Event in the life of any rail afficionado". Great Northern had used this phrase in its advertising of the Great Train, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s the E.B. had been one of the brightest stars in an otherwise darken-ing sky.

At the end of summer, 1974, the E.B. was still running, which is fortunate in itself; but the E.B. by late August began to resemble a Southern Pacific train in 1967 that had come under the cloud of evil intentions at the home office.

My trip from Seattle was only to Pasco, a six hour trip, to attend the wedding of a sister. I had looked forward to both the train ride and the family reunion; but Amtrak managed to start my weekend with a poor performance.

It was a hot noontime as the Labor Day weekend began, and a reasonable EMPIRE BUILDER consist was assembled in the King St. station. New Amtrak SDP-40F units 576 and 575 led a 16-car consist. From the point, these included NP 237, and NP 258, storage mail; NP 429 dormitory; 2026 "Loch Lomond", slumbercoach; coaches 4471, 4474, 4509, 4587; Great Dome 9361 "Ocean View"; diner GN 1153 "Lake Josephine" sleeper 2604 "Pacific Cape"; NP 377, an unrefurbished lounge-in-sky dome; sleeper "Clifton" sleeper 2639 "Pacific Union"; NP 333, a slumber-coach operating as a first-class sleeper; and BN business car "Red River".

This consist was deficient in that there were no dome coaches, and that a slumbercoach had been substituted for a first class sleeper, an event common in the summer of 1974. The consist represented a decline from that of 1973, when the BUILDER normally carried seven coaches, and also a coffee-shop car, either an ex-NP Lewis and Clark Travellers Rest, or an ex-GN Ranch car.

The summer season had begun for the BUILDER with a consist of five coaches, but this had been cut to four as the summer progressed, representing an unusual and somewhat mysterious decline in business, an anomaly in that August is usually the heaviest month of rail travel in the Northwest, usually some 10% above July and 20% above June. I felt that some of the apparent decline might have resulted from the 20% fare hike of June 9, but also carried an inner feeling that word about the service declines aboard the trains was beginning to get around. The experiences aboard that afternoon tended to confirm this latter suspicion.

We departed through a hazy afternoon at 1:20 pm, some 5 minutes late. As soon as my ticket was collected, I left my coach seat in 4587 and headed back to the dining car. I was told in a rather casual way that there was no luncheon serving; that if I wanted anything to eat, I could obtain a wrapped sandwich in the lower level of the Great Dome car! A somewhat rude shock, as I had not had lunch in my hurry to get to the depot. And even more rude when one considers the excellent lunches Northern Pacific hadserved on the 1:30 departure from Seattle for many years.

I moved one car forward to the Great Dome, a car I had very much enjoyed on many EMPIRE BUILDER trips in the late 1950s and 1960s. The lower lounge was "decorated" by stacks of supplies located in public view, giving the vague suggestion that the car was en route with relief items for some disaster area. The price for the wrapped sandwiches and other materials were handwritten in a scrawl on a sheet of paper that had been placed over the face of the cash register so that customers could not see how much had been rung up. Having read in RTN of dining crews pocketing the receipts, I wondered if such might be the case today. I ordered a wrapped sandwich and a Coke, and sat at a lower level table, listening to the song of the rails and the griping of other passengers who had expected service in the dining car.

Some 15 minutes out, we stopped. A track crew was tamping ballast. I could note the inscription on the nearby rail -- 11516 Lackawanna 1949. I turned back to the lounge of "Ocean View". It was sad to see the boxes of supplies stacked about; making the car do work for which it was never intended. Only a very light passenger load made the situation seem bearable. Had the train been heavily filled, the situation would have been organized chaos.

After six minutes, we moved forward again. As we got underway, a man came through the car looking for a trainman. Upon spotting one, he said in a loud voice that the en-suite bedroom wall in his compartment would not remain folded back, but closed with the motion of the train. The porter looked at him in a distant way, and gave others the impression of unconcern.

Sandwich finished, I walked upstairs, and noted grease on the passageway in the Great Dome. It was sad to see an old friend like this fallen on bad days. Surely I could not have guessed it from my 1960s trips on the EMPIRE BUILDER, which represented some of the most satisfying and inspiring traveling that I have ever done.

Once seated in the dome, I noted lexan glass in both forward and side window panels. Another tragedy, as the lexan glass, even when newly installed, in not useable. Even when not scratched, the distortion is enough to give one a headache, as if the wrong reading glasses were being used. I resolved that I may have to mount a personal campaign in congress to have lexan banned, and moved to a better seat. At 1;52 pm, and again at 1:57 pm, additional stops were made for trackwork; then at 2 pm. I noticed at this point that a steamer trunk had been placed on the bulkhead forward left, blocking the view somewhat. This was no loss, as the window there was of lexan, and could not have been used for viewing anyway.

As we dawdled, taking what seemed forever to make the 30-minute run on flat track to East Auburn, a gentleman dressed in a business suit asked of an attendant: "Is this the way to car 08157" (Car 0815, the 4587, was the first car ahead of the Great Dome.) With disinterest, the attendant said: "I don't know, you'll have to ask him." pointing to the conductor, who was passing through the car. This seemed to epitomize the slack and uncaring behavior of the crew.

We arrived in Auburn at 2:22pm, or 1' 07" from Seattle, and were 32 minutes late already. There was a snappy loading of the passengers from the Tacoma bus, and we were out at 2;26pm, having made up a few minutes with the quick stop.

Another conversation between well-dressed passengers and the conductor started up as the BUILDER pulled away from East Auburn. This time occupants in the NP 333, the slumbercoach substituted for a regular first class sleeper, were involved. Most of the car had been blocked for a Four Winds tour, which had 35 members when it departed for the West Coast. "Sleepers, huh?" asked the conductor as he paged through the ticket book of the passenger. "I'd thought you'd have abandoned ship," he said, indicating that there had been some dissatisfaction with the slumbercoach among tour members.

"No, we stuck with it," said the man.

"Well, I wouldn't have," said the conductor, a young and somewhat flippant man whom I felt would be a good candidate for some remote branch line local. It soon became apparent that when Four Winds found its passengers booked into the slumbercoach, that many of the passengers were flown back to the East Coast, another costly expense for Amtrak -- not only for plane tickets, but in lost goodwill, and a growing reputation for incomptitude. (Incomptitude is defined as an aptitude for incompetence.)

The sun gradually moved to the rear as the EMPIRE BUILDER found its way eastward into the Cascades. A few freights slipped by westbound, an amount of traffic heavier than normal, now that much of Burlington Northern's through freight business has been diverted to the ex-GN line over Stevens Pass, and the ex-SP&S line down the Columbia River.

After passing the balloon track to the west, we passed thru Lester, at the western foot of the 2.2% grade to Stampede Pass, at 3:04pm, some 25 minutes late, having recovered only one minute since departing East Auburn. We proceeded uphill on the westbound main, and I soon discovered the reason. The eastbound main is being removed! About a year ago according the crews, a westbound freight descending the eastbound main carried a car on the ties for several miles. Rather than replace most of the ties, BN has elected to retire the track. All rail was gone from the big steel trestle below Kennedy, which carries the existing line over the original main line. The original route had proceeded from Lester on the valley floor, under the steel trestle; and at the old station of Weston began the ascent with a horseshoe curve. This route was removed in 1913 with the completion of the steel trestle, but it's still easy to spot the block retaining wall to the east of the trestle near the point where the existing and former lines joined.

At the eastern end of the middle rung of the "S" curve leading to Stampede station, double track resumes with a switch cut into the former westbound main. After looping the loop up to Stampede, we had some beautiful views south and west, diminished only by logging operations and the ever-growing web of high voltage power lines. At 3:53pm, it was into the darkness of the 2-mile tunnel. Four minutes later, through the snowsheds, and into the open again at East Portal, with a quick craning of the neck to look rear at a thin trickle of water coming down the falls above the tunnel portal en route to Stampede Creek.

A smooth ride down the surviving double-track segment on the east slope of the pass, and we're in Easton at 3:50pm, some 21 minutes late. Across the way, long sections of the former electrical apparatus of the Milwaukee Road still remain strung above the right-of-way, although the running copper has been gone for over a year, and the substation equipment not far behind that.

We picked up speed on the flat track and soon were racing autos along I-90. At 4:26pm, there is an unscheduled stop at Teanaway Junction. At 4:33pm we move ahead, and at 4:46pm we stop again. In the silence, there is more discussion among the passengers the "bailed out" because of the "sleeper situation". More evidence that the slumbercoach had been unpopular with many of the tour group. Arrival at Ellenburg was 4:59pm, some 29 minutes down, and Yakima arrival was 5:55pm, 32" late. The BUILDER picked up speed leaving Yakima, and encountered track that had been substantially improved in many places over the conditions of the previous year. The shallow folds in the Horse Heaven hills to the south grew ever-deeper shadows and soon we were twisting past the lower reaches of the Yakima River. The crowd in the dome remained light as we moved into Badger Canyon, and crested the summit at Vista, west of Kennewick, to drop down into the Tri-Cities area, producer of grapes, cattle, chemicals, and the deadly elements that go into nuclear bombs.

Arrival at Pasco was 7:32pm, some three minutes early, giving an indication of the looseness of the schedule. I was too late for the wedding rehearsal, so found my way from the station platform alone, a contrast to the festivities ahead.

Traveling on the EMPIRE BUILDER resumed early in the morning at Pasco depot a few days later. The westbound edition was about 45 minutes late, and a patient crowd waited in the old but attractive depot. I walked through the passenger yard, and noted that some of the tracks had been pulled out. Probably by mistake, as they'll be needed again as soon as a Pasco-Portland connection for the northern transcontinental runs is resumed. I thought several dark thoughts about the rail exec-

utives so anxious to remove these small items so necessary for the smooth functioning of the passenger service.

The westbound train was pulled by units 539 and 628, and included 1023 and NP 233, storage mail; GN 1203 dormitory; slumbercoach NP 429 "Loch Tarbet" (in Scotland, the correct spelling of the lake is Tarbert); 9480 and 9545 "Silver Vision" dome coaches; GN 1096, an ex-CNW "400" coach; Great Dome 9365 "River View"; NP 463, a Budd diner; and sleepers NP 369 and "Benton". The last two cars were 2269 "Placid Waters" and 2615 "Pacific Hills". "Waters" had many bad lexan windows. We got away from Pasco at 6:21 am, some 36' late. My seat was in "Silver Vision", which still carries its ex-TWIN CITIES ZEPHYR mural at the rear of the forward section: "Chief Blackhawk surrenders - 1832". Loads of fun, but diminished somewhat by the discovery that the center and left forward dome window panels were of lexan, and thus almost unuseable. "It doesn't pay to sit by this window", said a man. "Gives you kind of a funny feeling, it's so dirty. Makes you nauseous," said the woman one seat ahead of him.

We arrived in Yakima at 7:45am, only 1'33" from Pasco, just about the same as when late on the eastbound trip. It is a shame to see two-hour running times listed in the timetable for this run, I thought.

The morning was crisp as I checked into the depot looking for a baggage locker. The agent told me there were none. I remarked that if tracks really were back, there should be lockers. In a Jack Benny drawl, the agent replied slowly: "We're thinking about it." I carried my bag back along the train to Yakima Avenue, and stepped into the BN freight office, just opening, and asked for a cab. The agent called one, but gave the wrong address. A second trip to the BN office netted some results, and I was soon on my way to the Greyhound station. The porter had offered me orange juice aboard "Silver Vision" just as I prepared to get off. I was sorry I turned him down. I was really hungry.

After a solid breakfast, it was a brisk walk to the carbarn of the Yakima Valley Transportation Company, to look at the newly-arrived streetcars, just in from Portugal. They looked beautiful. The morning passed quickly, and I soon found myself at the Greyhound depot for the 1:30pm departure to Seattle. A long line formed, with the inevitable crowd that looked at least part runaway high-school girl and AWOL serviceman.

Eventually two buses appeared to absorb the loads, and I found myself in the first, every seat taken. At least the air conditioner was working, I thought, as by afternoon the temperature had moved into the high 80s. I practiced my usual form of semi-hibernation I induce to help make travel in a crowded bus somewhat bearable. We rolled along the new freeway over the mountain ridges, built to get away from the twisting in the Yakima River canyon that slows the EMPIRE BUILDER. After several miles of hill-and-dale running, we began the long ascent to Manastash summit. The bus grew warmer. We slowed. Then stopped. The passengers turned and looked at one another. The driver pinched and fiddled with his apparatus, but there were only buzzers and other small noises. The motor refused to start. With no air conditioning, it grew hotter. A baby began crying." "Trapped" I thought stoically.

Eventually the second section pulled up behind us and stopped. "It keeps going in reverse" I heard the first driver say. There was more fiddling both in the coach and behind it; and in about a half-hour we were underway, Just in Time. I feared a runaway descending to Ellensburg, but we arrived without a hitch and most of the load got off, transferring to buses for northern central Washington via Wenatchee.

Between Ellensburg and Cle Elum, two teenage boys in rear seats lit up their reefers, and the smell of marijuana floated forward. Evidently the driver feared a fire, which might have been a logical consequence of the engine failure on Manastash. He pulled into a rest zone near Cle Elum and inspected the coach. By this time the first boy had extinguished his reefer, and the second had stepped into the adjacent restroom to finish his own marijuana. This evidently put both to sleep, as they were "out like lights" shortly thereafter; and as I mentally composed a short story to be entitled "Inhale, Inhale, the Gang's All Here."

To the east of Lake Keechelus, I looked across the valley to the east slope of Stampede Pass and could see the eastbound EMPIRE BUILDER descending the 2.2% grade. Although at least two miles away, I could pick out the slumbercoach, the dome coaches and the Great Dome, all stepping gingerly through the rugged mountain scenery, cars turning in precise order to the curves made visible by the cleared areas under the new power lines.

For all the troubles of Amtrak, ranging from lexan to inattentive employees, I felt I had to cast my vote, once again, for the rails. Amtrak might have problems, but life on the buses was worse.



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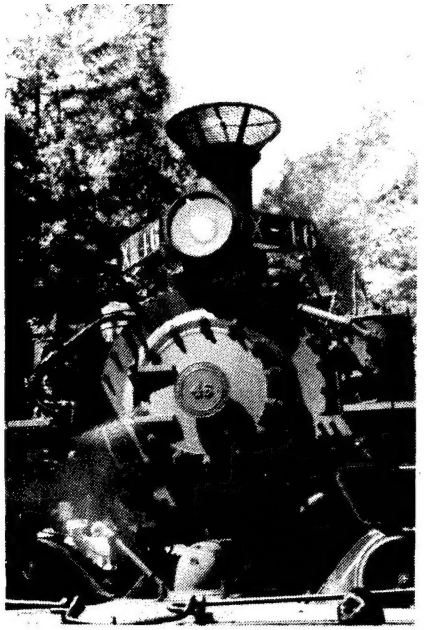

IF YOU WONDERED about the strange page numbering in this issue, the explanation is that we cut out a few pages at the last moment in order to bring you the issue on time. We'll make them up later. Better a short consist than a late train?..... THE CALIFORNIA WESTERN Railroad, operators of the SKUNK and SUPER SKUNK (photo at laft), between Fort Bragg and Willits, have filed with the state Public Utilities Commission for a 30% passenger fare increase. Another victim of inflation..... THE BART BOARD of directors, now elective rather than appointed, since the November elections, will debate the possibility of a flat 50-cent fare on the system instead of its present 30¢-$1.30 graduated fares..... PRESIDENT FORD'S BUDGET proposals will soon include a plan for making the federal aviation system pay more of its own way, by levying new fees on private plane users, and other charges to raise revenue, and putting FAA expenses under existing tax structures to free about $1.5 billion tied up in an Airport-Airways Trust Fund..... AMTRAK HAS DELAYED until January at the earliest a decision on reviving plans for direct passenger train service between Houston and Dallas..... A FREIGHT DERAILMENT on the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA's route on BN east of Gold Bar, Washington ripped up 800 feet of track on Nov. 19. The line was closed, and restored to service Nov. 21..... SEQBOARD COAST LINE freight derailment at Valdosta, Georgia on Nov. 16 just ahead of Amtrak train 53 forced the passenger train to back up to Dupont, Georgia. It was then detoured over former ACL rails to Live Oak, Florida, the SAL to Drifton, Florida, and then returned to the main line at Brainbridge, Georgia. The detour took about 5 hours, and the FLORIDIAN reached Chicago about 12:30pm the next day..... A FREIGHT DERAILMENT on Penn Central near Fort Wayne, Indiana on Nov. 15 forced the BROADWAY LIMITED to detour from Fort Wayne to South Bend and over the ex-NYC to Gary, Indiana..... A NEW PASS called the Amerailpass is now being used in the South American countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The cost is $50 for one month, $75 for two, and $90 for three. Info from: Asociacion Latino Americano de Ferrocarilles, Florida 783, Buenos Aires..... AMTRAK HAS A new ad appearing in college newspapers, showing a college student with guitar in hand, backpack and a shirt with a big "A" on the front, hitching a ride alongside a track. Ad reads: "There's a new rule of thumb for weekends and holidays. Amtrak."..... TRAVELERS TO ALASKA by the state's Marine Highways system are warned toavoid booking on the line's new Columbia, which failed to sail or complete the seventh weekly voyage in a row from Seattle Nov. 22, with mechanical difficulties. Previously, hitting rocks near Sitka and subsequent repairs, in addition to engine problems, have been responsible. A better bet are Tuesday sailings from Seattle on the 11-yr old Matanuska, which has run without incident...

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"The St. Mary's College football team was among groups scratching around for a replacement charter bus. It had planned to use Greyhound for transportation to its game with Southern Oregon College at Ashland Saturday afternoon."

--San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 20

(Greyhounds must be full of fleas.)

# *Urban-Suburban Transit*

HISTORIC PUBLIC TRANSIT BILL SIGNED

In a surprise move, the House quickly passed the $11.8 billion mass transit aid bill and sent it to President Ford, who signed it Nov. 26. The House action came Nov. 21, after the Senate had okayed the measure on Nov. 19. The bill makes funds available to big cities over the next 6 years, providing for the first time money for subsidies to cover deficiencies in fares.

FOLLOWING THE FAILURE of the mass transit measure in Los Angeles early in November, Supervisor Baxter Ward on Nov. 20 proposed a suit to condemn SP lines in the county to permit commuter service within 3 years. Another service would be run on Santa Fe by Amtrak between Los Angeles and San Diego..... LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY AREA voters approved an issue on the Nov. ballot to implement a 5½-year transit development program. It will be financed by a 1/5 of 1% tax on the gross earnings of wage earners and on the net earnings of corporations. Fares were reduced from 50¢ to 10 rides for $3.50 following the vote..... MICHIGAN TRANSPORTATION BOND issue was defeated in the Nov. election, with 801,000 no votes, 613,000 yes. It was a setback for rapid transit planning in Detroit. Some 10% of the needed $5.4 billion for a Detroit rail system was to have come from proceeds of the issue..... SOMEONE FINALLY SAID IT: An editorial in the Nov-Dec issue of Metropolitan magazine urged transportation agencies to ask the DOT and UMTA to stop saddling transit agencies with more and more regulation and paper work. The editorial urged that the rail vs. highway battles be put aside in favor of advancing all transit progress..... PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS SAVED $573 million in expenses in 1973 by increased use of public transit, according to E.L. Tennyson, deputy secretary of PennDOT. Highway use was thus down 6%. Half of the transit trips were made on non-highway vehicles. Total fuel saved amounted to 300 million gallons..... SEATTLE'S TRANSIT STRIKE was settled after 15 days, and bus service resumed Nov. 24. The Seattle Center monorail was back one day before that..... BART HAS FILED a lawsuit against the manufacturers of its trains, charging hundreds of defects in the equipment, among them a sag in the cars when loaded when causes doors to stick. BART refused the petition of Bay Area merchants to run Saturdays during the holiday shopping season, but is remaining open an extra 2 hours nightly (till 10pm) between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas..... A WEEK-LONG strike of Greyhound nationwide began Nov. 18, shifting riders to Amtrak and other carriers.....


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"EVERYBODY OUGHT TO RIDE A TRAIN..."

As he rode in a dome car on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, Johnny Cash sang this song, "Ridin' the Rails," to millions of TV viewers the evening of Nov. 22. The ABC-TV hour-long special may have been the best bit of rail travel advertising in a year or more. "Get aboard! They're outward bound again!" sang Johnny, as part of a program which gave a nostalgic and historical overview of the nation's railroads, and ended on the upbeat theme of the growing renaissance of the rails. The show, praised by TV critics, included re-enactments of such historic rail events as the incident of The General in the Civil War and the completion of the transcontinental route at Promontory Point, Utah. It was filmed with the help of Amtrak, several railroads and railfan groups.

MORE PERSONNEL CHANGES AT AMTRAK

In addition to the announcement of Roger Lewis's coming resignation as Amtrak President, the corporation announced in the past month several other appointments. Roger W. Brown replaces Don Ensz as Director of Service, while the latter becomes Special Ass't to the VP of Operations. Glenn Evers replaces Mr. Brown as head of sales. Richard Cook has been appointed as Regional Sales Manager - East.

THE OLDEST RAILROAD terminal in the nation is being restored. At Ellicott City, Maryland, the 143-year old B&O station is being restored to its original design, and will become a museum. Archeological excavations are also being made at the site.... TWO EX-SP FERRIES have been sold by Washington State Ferries to California interests, and will be towed to California from Winslow, Wash. They are the wood-hulled "Klahanie" (ex-Golden Age) and "Chetzemoka" (ex-Golden Poppy), used on routes to Berkeley and Sausalito from San Francisco. Two of the 5-vessel class were lost on sea tows, the Golden Bear off the Oregon Coast in 1937, and the "Silver Strand" (ex-Golden Shore) near Long Beach, Calif. in 1970..... UNIFIED OPERATION OF the Miami-Dade County transit system began Oct. 25 by the Metro Transit Agency, replacing the former Metro Transit Authority. Bus operations and rapid transit development are now merged in one operation..... THE FAMOUS TORONTO City Hall streetcar loop will be torn down soon as downtown redevelopment projects are acdelerated. The loop, behind the famous old City Hall tower, and across the street from the present curved City Hall buildings, has been a favorite of streetcar buffs for many years. Dundas cars using the loop will be diverted to a new loop terminal using track mostly operated only in emergencies--east on Dundas, south on Church to Queen, and north on Victoria back to Dundas.....

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